

## ANDREW HAVENER

Interviewer: Douglas  
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Place: Andrew Havener's home  
Transcriber: Sally Merrick



*Andrew Havener was born on September 30, 1979, and has lived in Friendship all of his life. His family has lived here for at least five generations. He is married and has one brother and one sister. Andrew has been a lobsterman for twelve years and enjoys playing baseball and basketball.*

**Q: When did you start lobstering?**

A: I started going with my dad when I was really young, and then I got my own boat when I was about 13 years old. It was a skiff, and I didn't get my own boat until I was 22, after I got out of college. I guess I was 12 or 13 when I got my own traps.

**Q: Why did you become a lobsterman?**

A: Well, I didn't really want to be one at first, but I think it just kind of grows on you. My

parents went, my father goes, my grandfather goes, my great grandfather went, and just surrounded me all my life. So I couldn't really get away from it.

**Q: What is your job on the boat?**

A: I'm the captain. I drive the boat and haul the traps and boss my sternman around.

**Q: Do you have someone who lobsters with you?**

A: Yep, I've got a 19-year-old kid named Elliot Montgomery, and he fills my bait bags.

**Q: is lobstering a tradition in your family?**

A: Yep, I'm a fifth generation. My father goes, and my grandfather goes, my great grandfather and his father, too. So it's been a long time we've been in it. I actually have my great grandfather's traps and his buoy color and his trap number. I kind of inherited all of his stuff. So, yeah, it's a tradition.

**Q: What is the length and the kind, and is your boat fiberglass or wood? What is the color, and how much horsepower does it have? And is it a diesel or a gas engine?**



A: I have a 34-foot fiberglass boat, and it's made by Calvin Beal, Jr. He designed it and it's called a South Shore. It's navy blue, and it's got a diesel-powered engine made

by John Deere, with 225 horsepower.

**Q: What was your previous boat?**

A: Before this boat I just had a skiff with an outboard, and I used to haul by hand. This is my first full-size boat.

**Q: What is the name of your boat, and why did you name it this?**

A: The name of my boat is the *Christo Salva*, and that is a Spanish name that means Christ saves. And I named it that because two or three times I've been down to Honduras, Central America, on mission trips, and the mission that I go to down there is named Christo Salva, so I named it after that.

**Q: What equipment do you carry on board?**

A: Well, for electronics, I have a fish plotter and sounder, a VHF radio, and a radar, and for safety equipment, I've got life jackets and a life ring and two safety survival suits. And then I've just got my oil pants, oil jackets, rain gear, and stuff like that.

**Q: Describe your lobster traps.**

A: My lobster traps are mostly all the same size; they're 2 feet wide, 4 feet long, and I've got all kinds of different colors of them--yellow and gray, white and green, black and orange. I still don't know which ones fish the best.

**Q: Describe how you set your traps.**

A: Well, generally at the beginning of the summer, you want to set them in the shallow water, in close around the islands, and then as the weather gets colder and as the season progresses, you want to move them down into deeper water. And so by the end of it, you're fishing your longest ropes in the fall.

**Q: Do you move them during the season? If so, why and where?**

A: Yep, I usually set them in close with short ropes and catch the first early shedders that first shed out, and then I move them down into deeper water and into secret spots that I know of and try to catch more lobsters there.

**Q: How often do you pull them?**

A: Well, in the summertime, when the weather's good, I usually haul them every four days. I'll let them set four days and haul them. But when it gets into the fall and later into the winter, it kind of depends on the weather. Usually you can't get a whole good week

right in a row, so you kind of have to go when the weather lets you go.

**Q: How do you tell your traps from someone else's?**

A: My traps are marked with my buoy color, which is yellow and black, so I can tell them apart that way. And then on the actual trap, I've put a name tag that's got my name and my lobster number, so that's how I can tell my traps apart.

**Q: Do you use toggles?**

A: I use toggles when I'm fishing on rocky bottom, and I use the toggle to keep the rope off the bottom so it doesn't get caught in the rocks. But usually if I'm fishing out off the bottom in muddy bottom where there're no rocks, I don't use them there.

**Q: What do you use for bait?**

Well, generally most people, or I, use herring, which is delivered right to the wharf from local people, but sometimes in the summer I'll go over to Beaver Stinson's in Rockland, and I'll get some pogies, which is a bigger fish that I'll just string on the line. And usually in the fall, I will go over and get redfish over at Beaver's, and I'll put that on top of a bag with herring.

**Q: When do you go out to lobster?**

A: I usually like to leave in the morning when it's still dark and try and get to my first trap when it's just turning daylight. So it depends on what time daylight is.

**Q: When do you come back?**

A: Usually I come back either when I finish hauling all the traps that I want, or I've used up the bait. In the summertime that's normally around 1:00 or 2:00, but sometimes in the fall when you're going further out, it might be 4:00 or 5:00.

**Q: How far do you go out?**

A: In the summertime, early in the season, I don't go out very far because you don't have to; you just haul in around the islands, but the furthest I go out would be probably 15 or 16 miles, just past Monhegan Island. And that's in the fall and winter.

**Q: How many traps do you pull in a day?**

A: On a typical day I would haul somewhere in between 200 and 300 traps.

**Q: Describe what you do when you catch a lobster. What lobsters do you have to**

**throw back? Explain notching lobsters.**

A: When I catch a lobster, the first thing I do is check to see if it's a male or female. If it's a male lobster, then I just go ahead and measure it; if it's big enough, you can keep it. If it's a female, you first have to look to see if it's got any seeds underneath its tail. If any female lobsters have seed on them, you've got to throw those back. And then you have to check to see if it's got a notch in its tail flipper, and it's the first tail flipper from the right hand side, I guess what you'd say. And if it's got a v-notch carved in it and it's a female, then you have to throw that back, too.

**Q: What other kinds of fish get caught in your traps? What do you do with them?**

A: I catch all kinds of different fish. I'll catch sculpins and codfish and dogfish and flatfish--flounders. And sometimes I throw them back when I'm in a good mood, but sometimes I cut them in half and put them on as bait.

**Q: Where do you take your lobsters at the end of the day, and who determines the price you get for them?**

A: I take my lobsters into LWG Wharf, and I put them in a crate, lay them up, and then later on that day the truck will come and pick them up, and the truck is usually the one that determines the price for us. I'm not sure who determines the price for the whole area. I guess some people say it's Atwood's over in Rockland.

**Q: What is a normal haul for a day? On a really bad day and on a really good day?**

A: I'd say the worst time to go lobstering is in the spring because it's really cold from the winter, and the lobsters aren't crawling much. And if you get one to a trap in the spring, I think you're doing pretty good, or at least I am anyway. In the summer when the shedders are crawling, you can have a day when you can catch two, maybe even three lobsters to a trap.

**Q: How does the weather affect your fishing?**

A: The weather plays a big part in lobstering. Usually in the summertime you can get good enough weather to go almost every day, but in the fall as you move your traps down further, on a windy day obviously the waves are too big, you can't go out, so the only days you can haul are when the weather permits; it really plays a big part.

**Q: How has lobstering changed since you began fishing?**

A: Well, I've only been fishing for around ten years, so it hasn't changed as much for me as it has for some of these older guys, but one big difference that I've noticed is in the lobster traps. Everybody seems to be getting bigger and better traps now and better

equipment and bigger boats, too. Everybody's getting bigger boats, bigger engines that go faster and going further out, it seems like.

**Q: What do you like most about lobstering?**

A: I like being my own boss and kind of being in control of things. If I need to take a day off, I can, and if I want to stay out extra late, I can. I don't know, I just like the freedom.

**Q: What do you like the least about it?**

A: The hardest thing about lobstering is that it seems like the prices keep going up on everything, and it costs so much just to go and to keep your boat maintained and to maintain your gear. It's quite expensive.

**Q: What happens when it's foggy?**

A: Once in awhile in the summer, if there's just one foggy day, sometimes I'll take a day off and won't go, but like this past summer, it was foggy for it seemed like two weeks straight, so we had to go and haul our traps. So I used my radar a lot to find out where the other boats and the other islands were, and I used my plotter, which basically is a map of the ocean floor, and my boat's placed on that map with a GPS system, so I could kind of tell where I was. But it's not very fun because you can't see around very much, but you just have to go.

**Q: What is a radar?**

A: A radar is a device that scans around your boat, and it can pick up different objects, so if you're next to an island, you look on your radar screen, and it will show you where your boat is, and then if you're next to an island, it'll show that island, mark that out, and also if there are boats nearby, it can pick those up, too, so if you're running in a certain direction and another boat's coming at you, you can see that boat in the fog or in the dark when you ordinarily couldn't, so you don't run into each other.

**Q: What kind of problems have you experienced at sea?**

A: Your boat breaks down every once in awhile, and that's kind of frustrating because you have to get towed in. I've never actually run aground or hit a ledge, but my younger brother did. We were out hauling this summer, and I thought--I was letting him drive--he knew where he was going, but I guess he didn't because he put us high and dry for a little while, and we had to wait for the high tide to come to float off. But nothing too serious.

**Q: Have you ever seen someone aground or having a problem?**

A: Yep, sometimes guys, if it's really low tide or something, if they're not paying attention, they'll get stuck up on a ledge, and it's usually kind of funny because you laugh at them a little bit, but then you just make sure they're OK. And sometimes guys will be hauling around you, and they'll break down or something will go wrong, and they'll call you on the VHS radio and yell, and you'll go over and tow them in.

**Q: What is the worst thing that has ever happened to you while you were lobstering?**

A: The thing that I hate the worst while I'm lobstering is when I lose my traps, and the end of the season I'll go out to take my traps up, and I'll go to take up a string of what's supposed to be 20 traps and only get 18 of them back. Something like that, and just boat traffic--tankers and stuff like that--will cut them off. That's the worst thing; it really frustrates me.

**Q: Describe your most memorable time fishing.**

A: My most memorable time lobstering was when I was in high school--I only had a skiff and an outboard, and I invited this pretty girl to go lobstering with me, and now she's my wife. That was our first date.

**Q: Do you ever lobster in the winter?**

A: I never have gone year 'round all winter long, but I might this year. But it's not really very profitable because you can't get out to haul your traps very often because of the bad weather, and you can't catch that many lobsters. And it's real hard on your traps because being out there all winter long bangs them up a little bit. So I might do it, but you don't seem to make all that much money really.

**Q: What do you do in the winter?**

A: In the wintertime when I'm not hauling that often or not hauling at all, I paint my buoys, and I build new traps for the upcoming season. I get the wire, and I bend it and clip it together and string the heads in.

**Q: How often do you eat lobster, and do you have a favorite way of preparing it?**

A: I don't like lobster, and I never have, so I don't eat it at all. But I'm always bringing it in for people and cooking it for other people. But if I'm at my house and we're having a lobster cookout, I'm usually sure that I have a hamburger or two.

